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STATE FOR SECC, EAP/MLS, AND OES/PCI/SMIRZA

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TAGS: [SENV](#) [KGHA](#) [ENRG](#) [CB](#)

SUBJECT: RGC WILL ASSOCIATE WITH COPENHAGEN ACCORD BUT
WANTS TO SEE COMMITMENTS FIRST

REF: STATE 3080

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

¶1. (SBU) The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has no objections to associating with the Copenhagen Accord in principle but wants to see concrete commitments from developed and major developing countries before taking action. DCM delivered Reftel talking points to Ouch Borith, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFA), urging the RGC to associate itself with the Accord by January 31. Ouch, who was part of the Cambodian delegation, said that he and his Minister were disappointed by both the process in Copenhagen and the lack of substance in the Accord. Ouch said he appreciated President Obama's personal involvement in the later stages of the conference, but regretted that the Accord did not include binding emissions reduction commitments and definitions of the assistance mechanisms for developing countries. The viability of the Accord, Ouch argued, depended directly on commitments from developed and major developing countries.

¶2. (SBU) Ministry of Environment (MOE) officials echoed Ouch Borith's comments in conversations with ESTHOff. Officials at the MOE's Climate Change Office (CCO) similarly praised U.S. leadership at Copenhagen, with one even saying that President Obama had "saved" the negotiations. CCO officials had strong concerns though about the effectiveness of the UN process after the negotiations, saying that the Accord was realistic given the number of divergent views presented at the conference, but that it lacked teeth. However, despite these concerns the MOE has submitted an analysis of the Accord to the MFA recommending that Cambodia join. The head of the CCO doubted, however, that the RGC would make a decision by January 31 and noted that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat's notification to the RGC had described the 31st as a soft deadline.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: Post expects that the RGC will eventually associate itself with the Accord; as a least developed country, Cambodia will not jeopardize its chances at accessing pledged assistance for issues like adaptation and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) projects. But Cambodia was clearly affected by the negotiation process in Copenhagen, and wants to see that larger players are taking the Accord seriously before committing to do the same.

RODLEY